

Textaufgabe I**Dollywood Values**

No one goes hungry at Dollywood. The cake stands at Dolly Parton's¹ theme park in Tennessee sell slices of apple pie that weigh three pounds each, and that's before you bury them in ice cream. The mixed appetisers at the best restaurant consist of a heap of battered² and deep-fried cauliflower florets³, a mound of deep-fried cheese sticks and a pile of potatoes slathered
5 in melted cheese. The next course might be a vast platter of southern-fried chicken. Only a real man still has room for apple pie after such a feast, but there are plenty of real men at Dollywood. And real women, too.

Dolly Parton's father was a semi-literate sharecropper, and she grew up
10 in a one-room shack with ten siblings and no indoor plumbing. Yet by the time she was in her late 20s, she was in a position to tell Elvis Presley to get stuffed. The King wanted to cover one of her songs, "I Will Always Love You". His agent demanded the usual terms, which included signing over half the rights to the tune itself. Ms Parton said no; a bold snub that made her millions.
15 Her composition was a global smash. Whitney Houston's cover alone sold more than 10m copies. Saddam Hussein used an Arabic version as a campaign song in 2002, though it would be unfair to blame Ms Parton for his victory, since there was no one else on the ballot.

Having made a fortune from music and occasional movies, Ms Parton
20 has ploughed a chunk of it back into the land where she grew up, near Pigeon Forge in the Great Smoky Mountains. The central attraction is Dollywood, which lures some 2m visitors a year. That is hardly world-beating – the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World had nearly 17m visitors last year. But Dollywood is a different kind of enterprise.

25 The theme-park industry has two tiers. The really big money is in what insiders call "destination" parks. These are so fancy and expensive that people fly thousands of miles to visit them. Asian governments invite Disney and Universal Studios to build ever-bigger parks on their territory in the hope that this will spark a tourist boom, which it usually does. Because they aim for a
30 global audience, Hollywood theme parks tend to be spectacular but self-consciously inoffensive to all nationalities. To learn about the real America, you have to look at its smaller theme parks – the ones only Americans visit.

People do not fly to Dollywood; they drive there in big cars full of squabbling children. East-coast accents, let alone foreign ones, are rare. The
35 park is thus an excellent window on what people in this part of the American heartland like. One thing they appear to like a lot is their country. The Liberty gift shop sells a staggering array of patriotic paraphernalia. You can buy a stars-and-stripes-decorated statuette of the Liberty Bell⁴ with an eagle perched on it. There are CDs of Ms Parton, also in red, white and blue, singing "God
40 bless the USA", and "My mom is a soldier" photo frames for kids whose mothers are in Iraq. The park even has a sanctuary for bald eagles injured in the wild.

Another thing visitors to Dollywood feel strongly about is God. The park has a chapel, named after the doctor and part-time preacher who delivered
45 baby Dolly for a bag of cornmeal. A bookshop manned by trainee preachers sells Bibles and Christian-themed novels. Employees at Dollywood are "not discouraged" from sharing their faith with customers, says a guide. And there is no alcohol on sale.

Lastly, the folks at Dollywood like to celebrate their own folk culture and
50 music. Parts of the park look like a 19th-century Appalachian town. You can watch real artisans blowing glass, making lye soap⁵ and carving chairs the old-fashioned way. Some have developed a country sales banter. "No cameras," says Tom, who makes wooden wagons. "The law in Mississippi's still looking for me."

PLEASE TURN OVER

55 Indigenous music is everywhere. In one corner is the Smoky Mountain String Band – three guys in blue dungarees with a banjo, fiddle and upright bass. In another is a bluegrass band called Naomi and the Wood Brothers. In Europe, exhibitions of traditional music and crafts tend to be subsidised and unpopular. At Dollywood, they are neither.

60 Sophisticates sneer at Ms Parton's theme park. The *Daily Express*, a British paper owned by a man who also peddles pornography, calls it "tacky". But the values it represents are as American as a three pound slice of apple pie. Dollywood's calorific abundance is quite healthy compared with Hershey Chocolate World in Pennsylvania. Its patriotism seems restrained next to the
65 nearby Patriot Park, with its annual Patriot Festival. Its brand of Christianity is less in-your-face than, say, the Holy Land Experience in Florida. It is tolerant, too. Ms Parton has many gay fans, who hold unofficial get-togethers at her park. Her grandfather was a hellfire preacher, but Ms Parton has an empathy for sinners. As a girl, she thought the town hooker in her make-up and stilettos
70 was the prettiest thing she had ever seen. "She was trash," Ms Parton tells interviewers, "And I thought: That's what I want to be when I grow up."

Most important, Dollywood offers a rags-to-riches tale with a simple happy ending. Ms Parton was born among the poorest whites in America. She had talent. She worked hard. She became fabulously rich and famous. The
75 world's first cloned sheep was named after her (it was cloned from a mammary cell). Yet despite all the adulation, she is still married to the man she met outside a laundrette in Nashville 43 years ago, when she was 18. And her husband is such a down-to-earth fellow that he shuns the limelight entirely. If reporters arrive at the couple's front gate while he is in the garden and want to
80 talk to him, he pretends to be the gardener. That may be too corny for Hollywood, but it resonates in the Great Smoky Mountains.

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Annotations

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|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Dolly Parton | famous country music singer also known for the size of her bosom |
| 2 battered | covered in a mixture of milk, flour and egg |
| 3 florets | small flower-like parts of a vegetable |
| 4 Liberty Bell | American bell of great historic significance; symbol associated with the American Revolutionary War |
| 5 lye soap | traditional form of soap |